

# Learning as a 13-Year-Old

*What to Expect This School Year*

2023 Issue

QSI



QUALITY SCHOOLS  
INTERNATIONAL



## QSI ESTABLISHED SCHOOLS IN...

**1971**

Yemen, *SANAA*

**1991**

Albania, *TIRANA*

**1992**

Ukraine, *KYIV*

**1993**

Belarus, *MINSK*  
Kazakhstan, *ALMATY*

**1994**

Azerbaijan, *BAKU*  
Kyrgyzstan, *BISHKEK*  
Slovakia, *BRATISLAVA*  
Turkmenistan, *ASHGABAT*

**1995**

Armenia, *YEREVAN*  
Georgia, *TBILISI*

**1996**

North Macedonia, *SKOPJE*  
Moldova, *CHISINAU*

**1997**

Bosnia & Herzegovina,  
*SARAJEVO*

**1999**

China, *ZHUHAI*

**2000**

Thailand, *PHUKET*

**2001**

China, *SHENZHEN*

**2002**

China, *CHENGDU*

**2004**

China, *DONGGUAN*  
Tajikistan, *DUSHANBE*  
Venezuela, *EL TIGRE*

**2005**

Timor-Leste, *DILI*  
Italy, *BRINDISI*  
Kazakhstan, *NUR-SULTAN*  
Vietnam, *HAIPHONG*

**2006**

Montenegro, *PODGORICA*

**2007**

Kazakhstan, *ATYRAU*  
Malta, *MOSTA*

**2011**

Belize, *BELMOPAN*

**2012**

Benin, *COTONOU*  
China, *SHENYANG*  
Hungary, *PÁPA*

**2015**

Germany, *MÜNSTER*  
Kosovo, *PRISTINA*

**2016**

Djibouti, *DJIBOUTI*

**2018**

Suriname, *PARAMARIBO*

**2022**

Guyana, *GEORGETOWN*

**2022**

Togo, *LOMÉ*

# WELCOME TO QUALITY SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL!

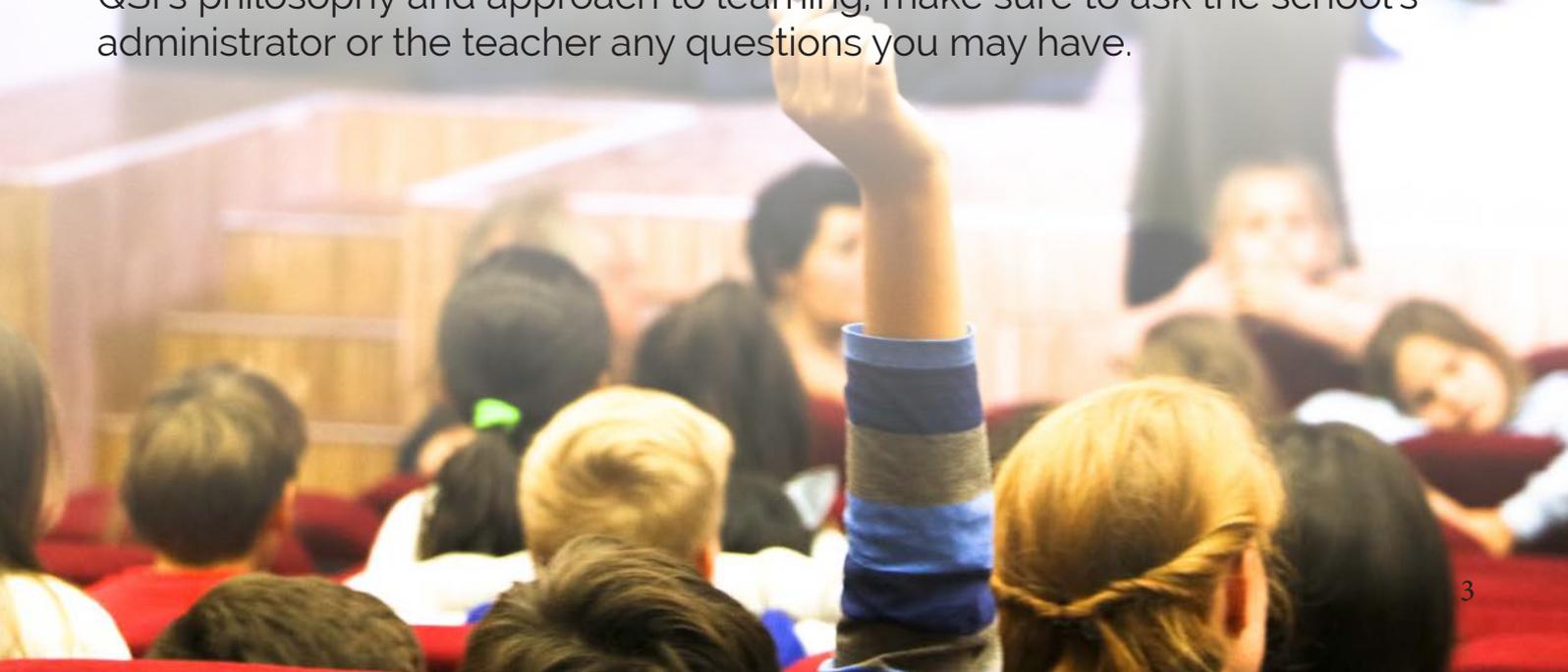
Welcome to Quality Schools International! This school is part of QSI, a group of schools that offers high-quality education throughout Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. With more than thirty years in international education, we offer the same educational model, curriculum, and materials throughout our schools.

This booklet informs you about what a 13-year-old student (equivalent to eighth grade in the USA and Year 9 in the UK) will be learning in school. Our classrooms bring hands-on and minds-on learning to our students. Our teachers empower students to learn about things they investigate about in the world around them.

Here we will present the four unique components of being a student in a QSI school.

- Building character and a culture of success  
-Success Orientations
- Model of education  
-Mastery Learning
- Methods to measure success  
-Evaluation
- What a 13-year-old will learn  
-Curriculum

For more information or if you would like to talk in more detail about QSI's philosophy and approach to learning, make sure to ask the school's administrator or the teacher any questions you may have.



# SUCCESS ORIENTATIONS

## Building Character and a Culture of Success

Success is so much more than getting A's and B's. We understand how important it is for students to develop the many good habits and skills that lead to being successful. QSI wants all students to grow in leadership, confidence, creativity, and the capacity to collaborate with others. We teach and help students to be trustworthy, responsible, concerned for others, kind and polite, successful group members, able to appreciate the environment around them, and be independent. We call these the *Success Orientations*.

### **Trustworthiness...**

...means students tell the truth and are honest about their interactions. It means that someone, like a friend or a teacher, can trust the students and count on them to do the right thing.

### **Responsibility...**

...means students come to school on time, prepared, and ready to learn each day. It also means they bring homework, materials, and books to school when needed and do their best consistently in every class, every day.

### **Concern for Others...**

...means students accept other people no matter where they are from or what their beliefs are. It means that students include others in their activities and help friends or others who may be sad or hurt. Students show others their care and concern for others through acts of sharing and moments of empathy.





## **Kindness and Politeness...**

...means students are kind and polite to everyone at school, not just teachers and friends, but also others who might not be their friends. It also means they are helpful and patient with everyone.

## **Group Interaction...**

...means students work well with others in class and in small groups. They cooperate with those in the group and work on ways to solve problems, find positive solutions, and develop collaborative skills. It also means they listen to others and their ideas even if they disagree.

## **Aesthetic Appreciation...**

...means students respect the spaces that they use in the school, such as their cubby/locker, classroom, hallway, or cafeteria. It means that they take care of the environment inside and outside the school by picking up trash and cleaning up after themselves. It also means students respect how other people create their ideas, not just in art and music, but in every class.

## **Independent Endeavor...**

...means teachers assign students work and students then do it by themselves. They pay attention to personal work and stay focused on the task at hand. Teachers can trust students to do the work independently and to the best of their ability. Students may pursue an interest beyond curricular expectations to further increase their understanding of the topic.



# MASTERY LEARNING

## Education That Makes Sense

QSI utilizes the Mastery Learning model when teaching students in our schools. It is a well-researched practice with strong evidence for being highly effective where students learn more information than traditional school methods which receive a percentage grade to pass and move on. Mastery Learning is not a new concept but is starting to become the model for schools looking to reach all students in a more engaging and meaningful way. The idea is simple. In a traditional school, students can pass their courses and miss 40%, 30%, 20%, 10%, and even 5% of the course content. In Mastery Learning schools, we care about the students mastering 100% of the course content. We believe that these gaps in learning, if left unchecked, turn into deficits, difficulties, and frustrations in learning in the future.

### *Time is a Resource*



Most education programs have some system of separating students based on academic achievement. It is acceptable for most school systems to teach all students the same things, to give identical exams to assess student learning, and then to observe, record, and report the differences in student achievement. In this scenario, performance becomes the focused variable. In mastery learning, time becomes the focused variable and changes with the intention of increasing all student performance. Time is not an indicator OF success but a tool FOR success. As such, it becomes one of the most valuable tools for students and teachers. All students are different and enter the classroom with varying levels of language fluency, emotional intelligence, work ethic, curiosity, aptitude for their studies, and degrees of content comprehension.

It stands to reason that not all students will be able to reach a high standard of performance at the same time. As a result of varying the time indicator for success, more students are able to demonstrate proficiency and achievement at higher levels throughout the year. As the quality and quantity of time work together to provide a positive learning environment, there is a shift in the perception of time. It is now used as a tool FOR learning that simultaneously develops and promotes a growth mindset. This shift in mindset leads to a solid foundation of learning and a healthy perspective of success that will benefit students throughout their education and careers.

## Instruction at the Appropriate Level

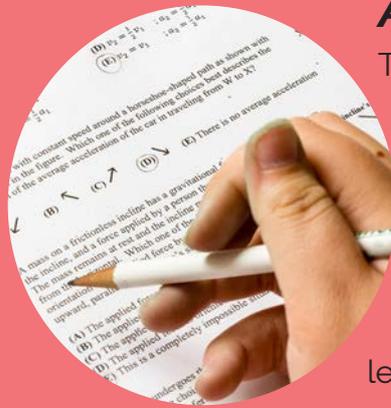


within

each unit.

We believe that success builds upon success. When students master all the learning objectives in one unit, they move onto the next unit. Learning at a level that is too easy may lead to boredom, and learning at a level that is too difficult often leads to frustrations. When students come to a QSI school for the first time, they will take placement assessments in mathematics, reading, and writing. After our initial placement assessment, it may be necessary to do follow up assessments. This process helps the school know just the right placement for new students to be in the right place for successful learning. Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to ENGAGE all students as they explore the content

## Assessment FOR Learning



Traditional education systems often identify the gaps without any plan or process to fill them. Mastery learning adheres to the principle that students must demonstrate proficiency or mastery in knowledge, content, and skills. If a student is not able to demonstrate mastery, he or she is provided with additional and differentiated support to first re-learn the material and is then reassessed on it. This cycle continues, similar to one-on-one tutoring until the learner has achieved true mastery. In this way, QSI uses assessment FOR learning, rather than just assessment OF learning.



# METHODS TO MEASURE SUCCESS

When students finish studying a unit in a course, they will get a grade. Grading in QSI is different than in traditional schools. We don't use percentages when we assign grades. We use rubrics and make sure students master all of the learning objectives at a B level. These rubrics define what an A and a B look like for each learning objective. We call these objectives TSWs (The Student Will). Students must master all the TSWs in a unit. If students do not master a specific TSW, the teacher will work and support students using different methods to reteach until students attain mastery.

**Here are two examples of some learning objectives for 13-year-olds:**

- The Student Will identify and analyze elements of argument in persuasive texts.
- The Student Will compare properties of linear and nonlinear functions.

**Teachers will ask students to demonstrate what they know in a variety of ways. This can be done by the following:**

- projects
- paper tests
- interviews to explain what they know or have investigated
- Etc.

QSI teachers encourage students to demonstrate learning in many ways, ensuring enduring understanding and a sense of success.

## Grades Indicating Mastery

## QSI Grade Definitions

**A:** The student mastered all the TSWs and consistently demonstrated higher-order thinking in their learning and made connections across subjects.

**B:** The student mastered all the TSWs and used many new skills to show their thinking.

## Grades Indicating “Not Yet”

**P:** The student is currently engaged in learning this unit. This may be during the current unit, or remaining from a previous unit.

**H:** The unit is on hold and the student will come back to this unit because they need more time.

**W:** The student is no longer engaged in this course or unit.

## Grades Indicating Insufficient Effort

**D:** The student did not try as hard as expected. They gave up during the unit and stopped working. “D” grades are never given without student and parent communication and opportunity.



# WHAT A 13-YEAR-OLD WILL LEARN

## QSI Curriculum Development

QSI Curriculum is developed by a trained team of QSI teachers who dedicate their time and efforts to improving the education of our students by embedding 21st Century skills and practices into our courses. They align the curriculum to various standards found in the United States, such as Common Core, NGSS, Aero, etc. Our textbook programs that support our curriculum are also from the United States. We then verify the success of our program by utilizing NWEA's MAP Growth assessments in Reading, Language Usage, and Mathematics. These computer-based, adaptive assessments are given to our students in the fall and the spring. We use the data to inform our instruction and evaluate our program.

## Courses Throughout the School Year

An 13-year-old student will grow in their knowledge, experience, and curiosity in these core areas: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Cultural Studies. They will also learn broader subject areas such as: Art, Library Skills, Music, Physical Education, and Technology. If students have already mastered English, they may learn a new language. Each QSI school offers students various opportunities depending on the school's location (e.g., Spanish, French, Russian, Chinese, etc.). These language courses are called LOE or Languages Other Than English.

## English Language Support

If a student does not know English, they will be enrolled in classes that will help support their learning to read, write, speak, and understand English. These classes are called Intensive English and will be offered at designated support times during the school day. The best way to learn English is to be immersed in a lesson where the teacher and students speak and learn in English.

## Curriculum Organization

Listed below are the course subjects with the units outlined in each content area. Subjects contain both essential and selective units. Essential units (ex. E01, E02, E03, etc.) are always taught. Selective units (ex. S01, S02, S03, etc.) are teacher-chosen units that fill out the course and vary from year to year.



## Foundations of Algebra-13

The Foundations of Algebra-13 course was designed to reinforce key skills needed for the Algebra course by offering robust coverage of the major content. An emphasis lies on ratio and proportional reasoning, number sense, expressions and equations which will lead to an understanding of functions and linearity. Students are expected to apply operational fluency as they continue the study of algebraic concepts. With the principle in mind that understanding is based on making connections, students will be challenged to apply learned concepts to new presented problems. To help achieve deep authentic command of concepts, the course stimulates students to intensify conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application. The capstone of the course is fluency in one- and two-step equations.

### Essential Units

(must be mastered to complete the course)

- E01 – Real Numbers
- E02 – Linear Equations
- E03 – Functions
- E04 – Data Investigation
- E05 – Systems of Linear Equations
- E06 – Transformations
- E07 – Dilation, Similarity, & Angles
- E08 – The Pythagorean Theorem
- E09 – Surface Area and Volume

### Selective Units

(to complete the course content or for additional study)

Teachers and/or students will pick one of the following units to complete Foundations of Algebra-13 with a total of ten units.

- S01 -- Goal Setting
- S02 – Congruence & Similarity
- S03 – Peer Tutoring
- S04 – Mathematical Investigation 1
- S05 – Mathematical Investigation 2
- S06 – Mathletics
- S07 – Probability
- S08 – Portfolio/Project
- S09 – Mathematical Reinforcement

### Expected study time per course:

45 minutes for minimally five days per week for a total of ten required units.



## Literature 12/13- Course II

This course is designed to further students' love of literature by engaging them in a variety of literary genres. A blend of narrative and expository genres are explored, thus preparing students to be successful readers and communicators. Although many of the units approach similar topics from previous literature courses at a deeper level, genres unique to this course include suspense and journalistic writing. Students will also be challenged to deepen their ability to think critically about the texts they engage with, whether in print or other types of media. In all units, students will also further develop their listening and speaking skills through communicating and collaborating with their peers.

### Essential Units

(must be mastered to complete the course)

- E01 – Reading Practices
- E02 – Narrative Fiction: Point of View/Voice
- E03 – Novel Study
- E04 – Suspense
- E05 – Narrative Nonfiction: Journalism
- E06 – Argument & Persuasion
- E07 – Nonfiction Research
- E08 – Drama

### Selective Units

(to complete the course content or for additional study)

Teachers and/or students will pick two of the following units to complete Literature-13 with a total of ten units.

- S01 – Goal Setting: Reading
- S02 – Portfolio/Project
- S03 – Service Learning
- S04 – Poetry
- S05 – Media Literacy
- S06 – Diversity in Literature

### Expected study time per course:

45 minutes for minimally five days per week for a total of ten required units.



## Writing- Course II

In the Writing-12/13 Course II, students will explore writing in its four modes: narrative, informational, argument and research. They will also respond to literature, write creatively, practice script writing, write poetry and explore media creation. Grammar and the writing process are central components throughout the course; it is expected that students will continue to build on language foundation skills to produce clear and coherent writing. The course provides students with opportunities for adapting their writing to different audiences, purposes, disciplines, cross-curricular topics, and to develop organization and style appropriate to different contexts. Additionally, speaking, listening, technology and media literacy skills are integrated throughout the course.

### Essential Units

(must be mastered to complete the course)

- E01 – Essentials of Writing
- E02 – First Person Narrative
- E03 – Literary Analysis
- E04 – Creative Writing: Suspense
- E05 – Expository: Problem & Solution
- E06 – Persuasive: Debate
- E07 – Research Writing
- E08 – Script Writing

### Selective Units

(to complete the course content or for additional study)

Teachers and/or students will pick three of the following units to complete Writing-13 with a total of ten units.

- S01 – Goal Setting: Writing
- S02 – Service Learning
- S03 – Portfolio/Project
- S04 – Poetry
- S05 – Media Creation
- S06 – Advanced Creative Writing
- S07 – Presentation Skills

### Expected study time per course:

45 minutes for minimally five days per week for a total of ten required units.



## Cultural Studies 12/13- Course II

Cultural Studies-12/13 Course II is a comprehensive historical study spanning from the period of the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment. Students will use an inquiry-based approach to learning where they will be encouraged and taught to think like a historian, economist, political scientist, and geographer by asking questions, evaluating sources, designing arguments, and taking informed action. Their findings will provide them with the foundation for modern history that will be taught at the secondary level. The course will help students develop analytical, collaborative, creative, communicative, and listening skills, as well as encourage independent thought and the ultimate realization that history is widely interconnected to other disciplines of study.

### Essential Units

(must be mastered to complete the course)

- E01 – Cultures of South & Southwest Asia
- E02 – The Early Americans
- E03 – Middle Ages
- E04 – Renaissance
- E05 – The Reformation
- E06 – The Scientific Revolution
- E07 – The Age of Exploration
- E08 – The Enlightenment

### Selective Units

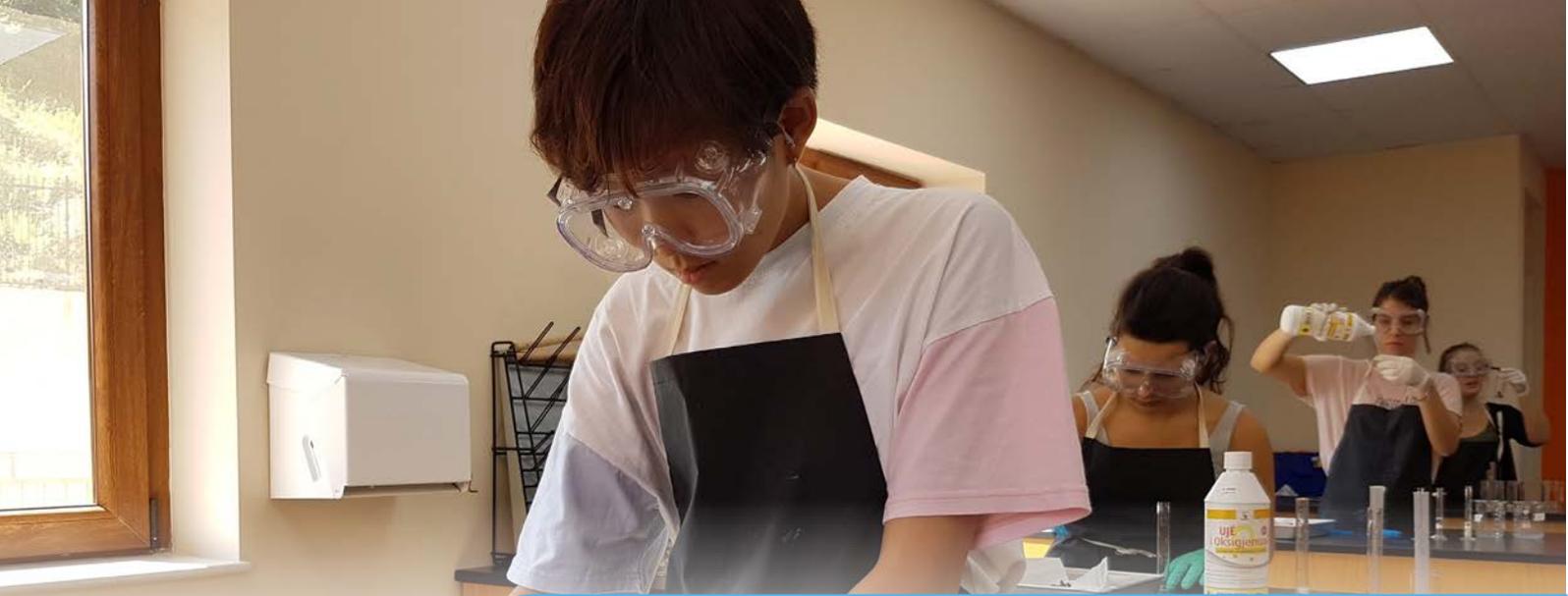
(to complete the course content or for additional study)

Teachers and/or students will pick one of the following units to complete Cultural Studies-13 with a total of ten units.

- S01 – Service Learning
- S02 – Portfolio/Project
- S03 – Debate
- S04 – Historical Figures
- S05 – Independent Research

### Expected study time per course:

45 minutes for minimally five days per week for a total of ten required units.



## Life Science 12/13

The intent and purpose of this course is to provide the student with a broad knowledge of major topics in biology – the study of living things. This course is designed to meet the Science Program Outcomes ([link](#)) and to provide students with the foundations of sound biological knowledge and scientific inquiry strategies to prepare them for future success in higher sciences.

Life Science 12/13 and Earth Science 12/13 have been designed to allow flexibility in grouping students at this level. In cases where 12 and 13 year old classes are combined, students can take either course in any order.

### Essential Units

(must be mastered to complete the course)

- E01 – Cells Structure & Function
- E02 – Organisms as Systems
- E03 – Animal as Living Systems
- E04 – Inheritance & Reproduction
- E05 – Plant & Animal Reproduction % Growth
- E06 – Matter & Energy
- E07 – Relationships in Ecosystems
- E08 – Ecosystem Dynamics & Biodiversity
- E09- History of Life on Earth
- E10 – Evolution and Change Over Time

### Selective Units

(to complete the course content or for additional study)

Teachers and/or students can chose an additional selective unit if time allows.

- S01 – Scientific Inquiry & Process
- S02 – Portfolio/Project

### Expected study time per course:

45 minutes for minimally five days per week for a total of ten required units.

# SPECIAL SUBJECTS

Special subjects allow students to explore other outlets for their learning. We explore creativity, fitness, technology, and languages other than English. These courses below are offered to all our students. The purpose is to develop a well-rounded student and to allow them to explore other avenues of communication. Regardless of the QSI school, we ensure that students learn all these special subjects. Some schools may be able to offer more time to some of these subjects than others because of school-based resources.

## Success Orientations, Social Emotional, and Child Protection Lessons

QSI is committed to teaching children habits and skills that help them to build character, manage emotional and social situations, and keep themselves safe. Currently, we have a full range of lessons on Child Protection that we teach children of all ages. We are also developing specific, age-appropriate lessons for Success Orientations and Social Emotional Development.



**Essential Units:** (must be mastered to complete the course)

E01 – Foundations of Visual Art

**Selective Units:** (to complete the course content or for additional study)

Teachers and/or students will pick one of the following units to complete Art-12/13- Course B with a total of two units.

- S01 – Exploration of Drawing
- S02 – Exploration of Painting
- S03 – Exploration of Various Media
- S04 – Exploration 3-D Art
- S05 – Cultural Connections
- S06 – Visual Journals
- S07 – Artist Study

**Expected study time per course:**

45 minutes for a minimum of one day per week for mastery of the two required units.



## Art 12/13- Course B

Elementary Art 12/13 B is designed to teach visual literacy as well as artistic process to students in the twelve and thirteen-year-old classes. They are modeled on the National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts. These standards are based on the artistic processes of creating, presenting, responding, and connecting with artistic ideas and works of art.



## Drama 12/13- Course B

Dramatic Arts 12-13 Course B is a fine arts elective. The course provides an introduction to two parts of theater for the students: a series of units introducing the development of dramatic acting and learning the basics of creating a theatrical product. Students will work diligently during the first four units to develop their skills as actors. Using the selective units, students can apply those skills to a school or class production.

**Essential Units:** (must be mastered to complete the course)

- E01 – Acting Exercises and Improvisation
- E02 – Movement
- E03 – Monologue/Dialogue
- E04 – Character Study

**Selective Units:** (to complete the course content or for additional study)

Teachers and/or students can choose an additional selective unit if time allows.

- S01 – Acting Exercises and Improvisation (Expanded)
- S02 – Movement (Expanded)
- S03 – Audition
- S04 – Rehearsal
- S05 – One-Act Play
- S06 – Production Marketing
- S07 – Scene Design
- S08 – Costume Design
- S09 – Prop Design
- S10 – Puppetry
- S11 – Scenes/Skits

**Expected study time per course:**

45 minutes for a minimum of two days per week for a total of four units.

### Selective Units:

Teachers and/or students will pick two of the following units to study based on student interest and/or teacher expertise to complete the learning in Music with a total of two units.

S01-S09 General Music Units  
S10-S18 Instrumental Music Units  
S19-S26 Vocal Music Units

### Expected study time per course:

45 minutes for a minimum of one day per week for mastery of the two required units.



## Music 12/13- Course B

The Music 12-13 B is designed for the twelve and/or thirteen-year-old class.

In this course, the student will be taught music through a focus in general music, instrumental music and/or vocal music. The student will be introduced to basic music concepts, music theory, practical aspects of voice training, and/or the practical aspects of playing an instrument. An important element of the 12-13-year-old music course are performance as a tool of building confidence and stage presence skills.



## Physical Education 12/13- Cr B

Physical Education-12/13 A is for students with maturing bodies and skill capabilities. The focus of this course is to develop efficient, effective, and expressive movement patterns that promote overall physical wellbeing and appropriate social and behavior skills in a Physical Education environment. Fundamental skills of body awareness, body movement locomotion, spatial awareness and manipulative skills are developed. The goal is for all students to feel safe participating in physical education classes. While team games/sports can be incorporated at this level, they should not be the central activity as the focus remains on inclusion and successful participation by all students. This is facilitated by allowing flexibility and adaptations in all games and activities to maximize participation. Developing an ongoing interest in physical activity is the ultimate end result.

**Essential Units:** (must be mastered to complete the course)

E01-Fitness  
E02 - Object Manipulation  
E03 - Throwing/Catching  
E04 - Kicking/Striking  
E05 - Team/Character Building  
E06 - Team/Individual Sports

**Selective Units:** (to complete the course content or for additional study)

S01 - Life Sport - Swimming  
S02 - Life Sport - Skiing/Snowboarding  
S03 - Advanced Team Sports  
S04 - Host/Home Country Games  
S05- Tumbling/Gymnastics  
S06 - Rhythms

**Expected study time per course:**

45 minutes for a minimum of three days per week for mastery of the six required units.

**Essential Units:** (must be mastered to complete the course)

- E01 – Keyboarding (open all year)
- E02 – Digital Citizenship & Information Acquisition
- E03 – Productivity Software
- E04 – Presentation Skills
- E05 – Beginning Programming

**Selective Units:** (to complete the course content or for additional study)

Teachers and/or students can chose an additional selective unit if time allows.

- S01 – Basic Image Manipulation
- S02 – Web Page Design and Development
- S03 – Digital Mapping and Geocaching
- S04 – Audio Production/Podcasting
- S05 – Movie Making and Video editing
- S06 – Graphic Design
- S07 – Game Design
- S08 – Desktop Publishing
- S09 – Yearbook 1: planning and layout
- S10 – Yearbook 2: Design and Image Manipulation
- S11 – Robotic Science
- S12 – Makerspace
- S13 – Projects in Emerging Technology I
- S14 – Projects in Emerging Technology II
- S15 – Virtual Reality
- S16 – Programming II
- S17 – Databases



## Technology 12/13- Course B

Technology 12/13 is designed give student the basic skills in technology to support the needs of student in gaining success in other QSI courses at the 12/13-year-old level. Skills, responsibilities, and applications such as keyboarding, digital citizenship, productivity software, presentation and programming are the essential basics found in the Technology 12/13 course. The outcomes are designed to be taught over the course of two years.

**Expected study time per course:**

45 minutes for a minimum of two days per week for a total of five units.



## Languages Other Than English (LOE)

These courses are offered to students of all ages who are enrolled in mainstream English reading and writing courses. In order to learn a new language, we want to ensure that students enrolled in our schools have a sufficiently high level of mastery in English first. Each school has different language options available to them and those language options are based on the countries where the QSI school is located. Please ask the Director or school office for details of the LOE program.

The LOE program focuses on learning how to listen, speak, read, and write in a chosen new language. Communicating in another language gives students the advantage of developing an awareness of a new culture and an appreciation of others in the world.

Each QSI school determines how many times a week LOE is offered.

If students are enrolled in LOE, the classes per week may vary between three-five times a week.

**Expected study time per course:**

45 minutes two to five days per week for mastery of the four-ten units depending on how often the class meets.

Quality Schools International (QSI), a nonprofit foundation, receives invitations to open schools from embassies, businesses, and agencies around the world. QSI responds to the needs of expatriates and host country nationals seeking a quality, progressive, English-language, North-American style, international education.

QSI schools accredit through Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.

